United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1186
20 July 1992

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Iraq "was prepared to invite experts from neutral and non-aligned countries to visit the building" of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation; two United Nations guards slightly injured by explosion today in Sulaimaniya.

+ Deterioration of situation "in and around Sarajevo airport" leads to suspension of humanitarian aid; Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina warns that conflict could trigger major war in region.

+ Secretary-General appoints Layashi Yaker of Algeria as Executive Secretary of Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); Benon Sevan to be reassigned as Assistant Secretary-General in office of Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

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Iraq "was prepared to invite experts from neutral and non-aligned countries to visit the building" of the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, according to Rolf Ekeus, Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament. The proposal was made during the talks he held on Saturday and Sunday in Baghdad with Iraqi authorities, including Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein.

At a press briefing tonight, Mr. Ekeus also told correspondents that he had conveyed the proposal to the Security Council earlier this afternoon, together with his own assessment of the situation. He stressed that, while in Baghdad, he had warned the Iraqi authorities of "serious, even tragic consequences" for their country if it persisted in its refusal to authorize the members of the United Nations Special Commission to inspect the building. The members of the Commission contend that documents relating to Iraq's ballistic missile prohibited programme are stored on the premises, while the Iraqi authorities claim that such a search would violate their country's sovereignty.

(more)

Mr. Ekeus also told correspondents of the rapidly deteriorating security situation of the Commission personnel in Baghdad, who have been increasingly subjected to acts of harrassment.

Mr. Ekeus had been sent to Baghdad last week to emphasize the importance that the Security Council attached to the inspection by the Commission experts of the Ministry premises. Following Iraq's refusal to authorize access to that building - on 5 July - the Security Council had demanded that the Government of that country immediately admit United Nations inspectors inside the Ministry, stating that non-compliance with the request constitued a "material and unacceptable breach" of section C of the so-called cease-fire resolution 687 (1991), adopted after the Persian Gulf war.

In a separate development, the Spokesman of the Secretary-General told correspondents today that a booby-trapped car had exploded this morning outside the United Nations Guards' headquarters in the northern Iraqi city of Sulaimaniya, slighly wounding two guards. The incident took place about 15 minutes before the guards' daily morning lineup.

The incident is the third one in the past 10 days: last Thursday, a Fijian member of the United Nations Guards Contingent in Iraq was murdered by unknown assailants, and a few days earlier two Austrian members of the Contingent were injured by a grenade tossed into the garden of their quarters.

The Memorandum of Understanding which sets the modalities for United Nations humanitarian operations in Iraq, expired on 30 June and Iraq has not yet agreed to its extension.

The Spokesman also told correspondents that Assistant Secretary-General for General Services, Richard Foran, was presently in Baghdad after having spent a few days in Kuwait. Mr. Foran was in the area "to oversee the continued return of property, as planned for the next three months, and to negotiate the location at which military equipment is to be returned".

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The situation in and around Sarajevo airport had "seriously deteriorated" and the airlift of humanitarian aid had been suspended, the Spokesman of the Secretary-General told correspondents today. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) reported that one hangar had been demolished and the control tower had been hit by bullets, and two Canadian observers had been hit by shrapnel and were hospitalized.

Three planes - an Italian plane from Pisa, a French plane which had taken off from Split and a Canadian plane which had taken off from Zagreb - had been in the air, on their way to Sarajevo, when the decision to suspend the airlift was made. All three, he said, had been ordered back to their bases. Since the airlift began on 3 July, up to the last flight yesterday, 280 flights carrying 3,346 metric tons of humanitarian supplies had landed in Sarajevo; 17 countries had participated in these operations.

(more)

At a press conference at Headquarters, the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haris Siladjzic, warned that if the international community did not act to halt the conflict in his country, it could trigger a major war in the area and terrorism in Europe. It had already done damage to Europe, he said, because it had "dehumanized the face of the world".

He expressed hope that the ceasefire - scheduled to have started last night - could still work. He pointed out however that preparations for a new offensive were underway even as the peace talks were taking place in London.

The situation in the town of Gorazde, whose population has been enduring heavy shelling, was of particular concern. "If the town of Gorazde falls into the hands of the aggressors, I'm afraid there'll be another massacre," he said.

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The Spokesman of the Secretary-General told correspondents today that Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Layashi Yaker of Algeria as Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), effective 13 August 1992. Mr. Yaker will replace at this post Issa Diallo, interim Executive Secretary of ECA, who will be reassigned.

Mr. Yaker has served as Algeria's Ambassador to a number of countries. Since 1989, he has been an International Consultant to UNESCO in Paris.

The Spokesman also told correspondents that the Secretary-General had reassigned Benon Sevan to the post of Assistant Secretary-General in the office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Vladimir Petrovsky. In his new position Mr. Sevan would deal with the Security Council and the General Assembly. Mr. Sevan had served as Secretary-General's Special Representative in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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